

1. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device for carrying out a partial fundoplication, comprising:
  - a distal bending portion having a distal tip and a flexible portion suitable to be positioned in extended shape within the esophagus of a subject;
  - a positioning assembly comprising two separate elements, one of which is located on said distal bending portion, and the other on said flexible portion;
  - a stapling assembly comprising a staple ejecting device, wherein said staple ejecting device is located on either said bending portion or on said flexible portion, said staple ejecting device being in working positioned relationship when said two separate elements of said positioning assembly are aligned; and
  - circuitry for determining when said two separate elements of said positioning assembly are aligned.
2. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, wherein the stapling assembly further comprises an anvil, wherein either said anvil or said staple ejecting device is located on said bending portion, and the other is located on said flexible portion, said anvil and said staple ejecting device being in working positioned relationship when the two separate elements of the positioning assembly are aligned.
3. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, comprising safety means for disabling the operation of the staple ejecting device when the two separate elements of the positioning assembly are not aligned.

4. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, comprising viewing means.
5. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 4, wherein the viewing means comprise a video camera.
6. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 4, wherein the viewing means comprise illumination apparatus.
7. [CANCELED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, comprising conventional endoscopic devices and accessories.
8. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1 [7],  
~~[wherein the conventional endoscopic devices and accessories comprise]~~  
comprising one or more channels for supplying one or more of the following:  
water and~~[/or air supply and/or]~~ suction.
9. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, further comprising ~~[a]~~ positioning ~~[assembly]~~ markings to position a portion of the stapling assembly within the esophagus at a location of about 5-6 cm above the ~~[gastroesophageal]~~ gastroesophageal junction, when said endoscopic device is in working position.

10. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 9, wherein  
the portion of the stapling assembly comprises the [anvil] staple ejecting device.

11. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 9,  
wherein the portion of the stapling assembly is displaced along the axis of said  
endoscopic device by the action of a flexible threaded cable coupled with a female  
thread located in said portion of said stapling assembly.

12. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 11,  
wherein the flexible threaded cable is located within said endoscopic device, and  
is in contact with the female thread through a slit provided in ~~the wall of the body~~  
~~ef]~~ said endoscopic device.

13. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 11,  
wherein the flexible threaded cable is embedded in ~~the external wall of~~ said  
endoscopic device, and is in direct contact with the female thread of the portion of  
the stapling assembly.

14. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 11,  
wherein the flexible threaded cable is rotated using a micrometric assembly,  
thereby to displace the portion of the stapling assembly positioned within the  
esophagus by a controlled distance.

15. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 10,  
wherein the anvil is essentially ring-like in shape.

16. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, wherein the [distal] element of the positioning assembly located on the distal bending portion is located on the distal tip.
17. [CANCELED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, wherein the distal element of the positioning assembly is located on the outer wall of the distal tip.
18. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 2, wherein the [distal] portion of the stapling assembly located on the distal bending portion is located on the distal tip.
19. [CANCELED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, wherein the distal portion of the stapling assembly is located on the outer wall of the distal tip.
20. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] A method for carrying out an endoscopic partial fundoplication of the fundus of the stomach of a patient, comprising the steps of:
  - (One) providing an endoscopic device comprising a bending portion and a flexible portion, a positioning assembly comprising two separate elements, and a stapling assembly comprising a staple ejecting device;
  - (Two) moving the distal tip of said endoscopic device so as to engage said fundus of said patient and to displace it toward the lower part of the esophagus;
  - (Three) bringing said stapling assembly into working positioned relationship by aligning said two separate elements of said positioning assembly, wherein

one of said elements is located on the bending portion and the other on the flexible portion of said endoscopic device;

(Four) determining when said two separate elements of said positioning assembly are aligned by maximizing a signal resulting by bringing them into close positioned relationship, which is received at a signal receiving and analyzing circuit cooperating with said positioning assembly;

(Five) ejecting a plurality of staples from said staple ejecting device, thereby to connect the tissue between them; and

(Six) rotating said endoscopic device relative to the axis of said esophagus and repeating steps (c) through (e) for as many times as needed to achieve the desired partial fundoplication.

21. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] A method according to claim 20, wherein the stapling assembly further comprises an anvil, wherein either said anvil or said staple ejecting device is located on the bending portion, and the other is located on the flexible portion.
22. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] A method according to claim 20, wherein the signal resulting by bringing the two separate elements of said positioning assembly into close positioned relationship is maximized by measuring a physical parameter which is a function of the distance.
23. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] A method according to claim 20, wherein the signal resulting by bringing the two separate elements of said positioning assembly

into close positioned relationship is maximized by correlating it to a measured physical parameter.

24. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] A method according to claim 21, wherein the distance between the staple ejecting device and the anvil is between about 0.5 and 1.5 cm.

25. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] A method for positioning the endoscopic device of claim 1 in pre-aligned working position, comprising the steps of:

- (One) introducing said endoscopic device through the mouth of a patient and locating the position of the gastroesophageal junction;
- (Two) determining the distance from a reference point located on said endoscopic device, and said gastroesophageal junction;
- (Three) introducing said endoscopic device into the stomach to a distance below said gastroesophageal junction sufficient to permit the distal tip to be flexed into a position where the fundus is pushed toward the esophagus;
- (Four) locking said endoscopic device such that it cannot move relative to the axis of said esophagus;
- (Five) determining the position of the portion of the stapling assembly positioned within said esophagus by using its original axial location, said distance determined in step (two), and the radius of curvature of the distal portion of said endoscopic device; and
- (Six) displacing said portion of the stapling assembly so as to position it in the range of about 5-6 cm above said gastroesophageal junction.

26. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 2, wherein the stapling assembly comprises a staple ejecting device and an anvil, wherein said staple ejecting device and said anvil are located longitudinally displaced from one another along the longitudinal axis of said endoscopic device, with at least a part of the flexible portion between them.
27. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26, wherein the portions of the stapling assembly are in correct working relationship when one or more alignment/locking pins that are stored either in the staple ejecting device or the anvil are extended and engage and lock into receptacles that have been provided on the other portion of said stapling assembly.
28. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 27, wherein the alignment/locking pins can be extended and retracted from the portion of the stapling assembly in which they are stored.
29. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 28, wherein a dual rack and single pinion system is employed to provide the motion of the alignment/locking pins.
30. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 27, wherein the alignment/locking pins can be locked and released from the receptacles that are provided in the portion of the stapling assembly.

31. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 27, wherein two alignment/locking pins are provided.
32. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 27, wherein the alignment/locking pins are stored in the anvil.
33. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26, wherein either the staple ejecting device or the anvil is located proximately to the proximal end of the flexible portion and the other portion of the stapling assembly is located proximately to the distal end of said flexible portion.
34. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 33, wherein the staple ejecting device is located proximately to the proximal end of the flexible portion and the anvil is located on the distal tip of said flexible portion.
35. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26, wherein either the staple ejecting device or the anvil is located on the flexible portion of the endoscope and the other portion of the stapling assembly is located proximately to the distal end of said flexible portion.
36. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26, wherein either the staple ejecting device or the anvil is located on the flexible portion.

37. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26,  
wherein the flexible portion is an articulation section.
38. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 37,  
wherein the articulation section is a two-way articulation section.
39. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 37,  
wherein the articulation section is a four-way articulation section.
40. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 37,  
wherein activation of the articulation section causes the portions of the stapling  
assembly to be brought into correct working relationship.
41. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26,  
wherein the staple ejecting device contains a staple cartridge containing one or a  
plurality of arrays of staples each array consisting of one or a plurality of staples.
42. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 41,  
wherein the arrays of staples are fired by staple pushers actuated by cams actuatable  
by proximal means.
43. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 41,  
wherein the staple cartridge is indexable after the firing of each of the arrays of  
staples by the action of a proximal actuating device.

44. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 41, wherein the number of the arrays of staples is three and the number of staples in each of said arrays is five.
45. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 41, wherein the staples of each array are arranged in three rows with the pinholes aligned with the middle row.
46. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 26, comprising safety means for disabling the operation of the staple ejecting device when the two separate portions of the stapling assembly are not aligned.
47. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 27, wherein the alignment/locking pins are manufactured such that the pin tips can be broken by the force exerted by unbending the articulation section.
48. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1, comprising two or more separate optical channels that produce two or more distinct views, each of said optical channels consisting of an objective lens and a means of capturing or viewing the image, wherein each objective lens is located at a different position along the length of said endoscopic device.
49. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 48, in which each of said distinct multiple views may be formed by a single optical

channel to produce a monocular view, or by multiple optical channels to produce a binocular or stereoscopic view.

50. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 48, in which the components of said optical channels and said display apparatus are chosen such that said endoscope can operate in either the visible, ultraviolet, infrared, or x-ray portions of the electromagnetic spectrum.
51. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 65, in which said objective lens, ocular, and coupling lens have either fixed focal length, multiple focal lengths, or variable focal lengths.
52. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 48, in which the center of each of said distinct views is at an angle of between 0 and 180 degrees with respect to the mechanical axis of said endoscope.
53. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 49, in which the field of view of each of said optical channels may be of any suitable shape.
54. [CANCELLED] A distal tip for the Gerd endoscope of claim 1, comprising:
  - a) a socket suitable to receive elements of a stapling device;
  - b) at least one illumination channel; and
  - c) at least one objective lens coupled to an optical relay system.

55. [CANCELLED] A distal tip according to claim 54, further comprising a suction and/or irrigation channel.
56. [CANCELLED] A method for determining the relative position of two parts of an endoscopic device comprising measuring the distance between said parts based on the use of one or more transducers or arrays of transducers functioning as transmitters of ultrasonic signals and one or more transducers or arrays of transducers functioning as receivers of said ultrasonic signals, and determining the degree of alignment therefrom.
57. [CANCELLED] Endoscopic device comprising a system for measuring the distance between and/or the relative alignment of two objects located at two different locations along the length of said endoscope comprising one or more transducers or arrays of transducers functioning as transmitters of ultrasonic signals located on, or near, one of said objects and one or more transducers or arrays of transducers functioning as receivers of said ultrasonic signals located on, or near, the other of said objects.
58. [CANCELLED] Endoscopic device according to claim 57, wherein at least one of the transducers or arrays of transducers functioning as receivers of ultrasonic signals is replaced by a reflector and at least one of the transducers or arrays of transducers functioning as transmitters of said ultrasonic signals also functions as a receiver of said signals.

59. [CANCELLED] Endoscopic device according to claim 58, wherein a single ultrasonic transducer, used to both transmit and receive the ultrasonic signals, is mounted on, or near, one of the objects and at least one reflector is mounted on, or near, the second object, said reflector being suitable to reflect back a pattern that can be translated into the position and orientation of said objects relative to each other.
60. [CANCELLED] Endoscopic device according to claim 59, comprising a reflecting device consisting of two, or more, parallel reflecting planar surfaces intersected, at an angle of 90 degrees or less, by one or more planes to form one, or more, step-like configurations.
61. [CANCELLED] Endoscopic device according to claim 60, wherein some or all of the steps in the step reflector have different depths.
62. [CANCELLED] A method according to claim 56, wherein an anvil unit of a stapler system is one of the objects to be aligned and a stapler deployment unit containing a stapler cartridge is the other object.
63. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 1 wherein the staple ejecting device is a stapler cartridge comprising one or more reflectors of ultrasonic waves is created on or within or as an integral part of the surface of said cartridge.

64. [PRESENTLY AMENDED] An endoscopic device according to claim 2, wherein the staple ejecting device is a staple cartridge, said endoscopic device comprising a transducer that transmits only, or receives only, or both transmits/receives mounted into either the anvil or said staple cartridge.
65. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 48, wherein each channel comprises one or more of the following elements: a) an optical relay system; b) an ocular; and c) a coupling lens suitable to deliver the image acquired by said objective lens to an image sensor and display apparatus.
66. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 53, wherein the field of view of each of said optical channels is either circular or rectangular.
67. [PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED] An endoscopic device according to claim 53, wherein the field of view of each of said optical channels has an angular view of up to more than 180 degrees.